

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2777
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 3795

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UV
SUBJECT: THE PAINFUL ROAD BACK TO CIVILIAN RULE

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 3303

1. WHEN I SAW PRESIDENT LAMIZANA EARLIER THIS WEEK, I ASKED HIM HOW HIS GOVERNMENT WAS REACTING TO THE REPORT AND DRAFT CONSTITUTION SUBMITTED BY THE SPECIAL COMMISSION. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD COMPLETED ITS REVIEW OF THE REPORT AND HAD MADE ITS RECOMMENDATIONS. THE REPORT WAS NOW BEING STUDIED BY THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES. HE ADDED THAT WHILE HIS CRITICS WERE CLAIMING THAT HE WOULD MAKE DRASTIC CHANGES IN THE PROPOSED DRAFT CONSTITUTION, HE WAS, IN FACT, GENERALLY IN AGREEMENT WITH THE SPECIAL COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS AND WOULD MAKE ONLY MINOR AMENDMENTS. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT THE TIME-TABLE PROPOSED BY THE SPECIAL COMMISSION FOR THE VARIOUS STEPS LEADING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CIVILIAN RULE WAS UNREALISTIC AND THAT
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MORE TIME WAS NEEDED TO SET UP POLITICAL PARTIES

AND ORGANIZE PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

2. LAMIZANA EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY FOR THE ARMY TO STAY OUT OF POLITICS. HE SAID THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL FO THE ARMED FORCES WERE AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ALREADY, POLITICIANS WERE MAKING CONTACT WITH ARMY OFFICERS IN AN EFFORT TO GET THEIR SUPPORT. THIS, HE THOUGHT, WAS VERY DANGEROUS AND COULD NOT BE TOLERATED. THE SOONER THE ARMY RETURNED TO ITS BARRACKS, THE BETTER IT WOULD BE FOR ALL CONCERNED. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL MONTHS, LAMIZANA AGAIN TALKED ABOUT RETIREMENT. HE RECALLED HIS LONG YEARS IN THE FRENCH ARMY, THE VOLTAN ARMY AND THE PRESIDENCY, AND SPOKE WITH NOSTALGIA OF HIS FARM NEAR BOROMO WHICH, HE SAID, HE HAD NOT SEEN FOR YEARS.

3. COMMENT: LAMAZANA IS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 27 THIS MEETING HAS ALREADY BEEN POSTPONED SEVERAL TIMES PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT, THE MLN-ORIENTED GOVERNMENT, AND THE ARMED FORCES COULD NOT AGREE ON A JOINT POSITION. ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR, THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES HAS OVER-RULED THE PRESIDENT ON THE QUESTION OF THE TIME-TABLE AND IS GENERALLY GIVING STRONG SUPPORT TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION. MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL SHORTLY RESHUFFLE HIS GOVERNMENT BY REMOVING SEVERAL ARMY OFFICERS AND REPLACING THEM BY MEMBERS OF THE FORMER MAJORITY UDV-RDA PARTY. IT IS ALSO EXPECTED THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL ANNOUNCE HIS DECISION REGARDING A TIME-TABLE FOR A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE IN A MAJOR SPEECH TO THE NATION, PERHAPS ON DECEMBER 10, ON THE EVE OF UPPER VOLTA'S NATIONAL DAY. GRAHAM

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